1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
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ceremony; I found no case in which any widow had married a man who was not her dead husband's brother (or parallel-cousin). Indeed, owing to the distances between Hill Maria villages and the fact that in nearly all of them the men are all of one clan, irregular marriages are far less common there than in the mixed-clan villages of the Bison-horn Marias. Among the latter the second husband has sometimes to compensate the dead husband's parents in part for the bride-price paid by them when their son married the widow, as well as compensating their younger son, if any. Sometimes the widow and second husband sit side by side on stools, the widow wearing a new cloth and new ornaments, and near relatives put marks on their foreheads with oil and turmeric. There is also sometimes a ceremony to transfer the widow from the clan of her former to that of her new husband; two pieces of grass are placed together in the form of a cross to represent a man, and this cross is separated from another by a knife. Two leaf-cups are filled with water, and three times water is poured from one into the other. The two grass crosses representing the two husbands are sprinkled thrice with the water, and then the heads of the crosses are plunged together first into one cup and then into the other. The knife is regarded as the witness of this transfer of the woman from one clan to the other. When a woman elopes from one husband to another, there is sometimes a similar reconciliation ceremony between the two men after the new husband has obeyed the *panchayat's* decision as to the compensation to be paid to the first husband; their four hands are placed together, and water is poured thrice over them.

It has been seen that women not only have practically free choice among the Hill Marias and considerable choice among the Bison-horn Marias as to their husbands, and that among the latter a woman frequently goes off to a new husband if she wants to. This is practically all that there is in the way of divorce, the position being regularized by the *panchayat* insisting on the new husband paying the appropriate compensation, which is generally only the bride-price paid for the woman at her original marriage. The children, if any, remain in the father's custody, since they belong to his clan. Women often desert their first husband if they have no children and consider his sterility the cause. Physical revulsion from an abnormality is another known cause; a Kuruk Maria fishing girl in the Behra Mar hill *parpana* ran away from a husband with a withered leg, which she said had been wasted away by an angry demon (*rau*), and despite her father's and brother's entreaties to her not to put them to the expense of having to refund to her husband the heavy bride-price of Rs. 70 that he had paid them for her, absolutely refused to return. Hare-lipped men seem to have

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586 732 no difficulty in getting wives to stay with them. Dwarfs, on the other hand, not only find it hard to get wives except their elder brothers' widows, but are passed over in the succession to a post of responsibility or the management of a family. Madness is particularly dreaded, and would certainly involve the elopement of a wife. But husbands, though they would divorce a mad [833] woman *a thoro*, would still maintain them; sexual intercourse with a mad woman is believed to result in complete loss of virility. 586 I have heard of no case in which a husband has divorced his wife; she may be frigid or barren or in other ways unsatisfactory, but so long as she is not unfaithful her husband is expected to maintain her, and his remedy is to seek another co-wife, often getting her younger sister or parallel-cousin as compensation for her falling [674] short of expectations. The murder of wives in sudden fits of temper for petty shortcomings is unfortunately common among the Bison-horn Marias, though almost unknown in the hills. Nor must it [837] be assumed that because Bison-horn wives often elope, their husbands tamely submit to infidelity; the detection of an intrigue often results in the husband killing the wife or her paramour, though once a wife has made good her escape to another man's house the [593] husband usually accepts the *fait accompli*. The beating or ill-treatment of wives is strongly condemned by all Marias. ^a

^a [see cat. 116, p. 425, – Analyst]